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Serial No. 10/652,119
Page 6**REMARKS**

By this Amendment, claims 3, 5, 6, 13 and 20-23 are canceled. Claims 1, 4, 12 and 14-16 are amended to more clearly describe the invention. Claims 2, 7-11, 15-16 and 17-19 are previously presented. No new claims are added. Accordingly, claims 1-2, 4, 7-12 and 14-19 remain pending in the application.

Specification Objection

The Examiner objected to the specification under 37 CFR 1.75(d) because precision molded has not been described in the specification. Claims 12 and 13 added the term "precision" in the February 7, 2006 Amendment. In the present Amendment, the term "precision" has been deleted from claim 12 and claim 13 has been canceled.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description. Specifically, the Examiner states that "precision molded has no basis in the original disclosure." As stated above, the term "precision" has been deleted from claim 12 and claim 13 has been canceled.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 1-8 and 10-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent 5,867,621 (Luther et al.). The Examiner states that "Luther et al. shows a multi-fiber ferrule 38 with a molded ferrule body having a plurality of bores 52 for receiving ends of optical fibers, openings 50a, 50b for receiving alignment members and defining a longitudinal axis wherein the ferrule body comprises an integrally formed geometrical reference feature 44 that defines a reference plane which can be used for determining the angularity of a plane defined by the molded end face 46, 48 by visually comparing the two planes. *The geometric feature 44 and the end faces 46, 48 are on a bumper of the ferrule body...*". Office

Action at page 3 (emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection in view of the amendments to base claims 1, 4, 12, 14 and 17. Luther et al. discloses a ferrule (Fig 1 at 38) having a large end face 44 and a small end face 48 formed as the bumpers of the ferrule are ground subsequent to the molding process. Surface 44 is produced by machining the bumpers away. Applicant argues that surface 44 *is in fact machined and altered after molding* because it is necessary to grind the bumpers away to mate the ferrule, otherwise the bumpers would prevent the mating optical fibers from coming in physical contact. Surface 44 is not a reference surface for measuring planarity of the end face, and is not a molded integral reference feature. The Luther et al. reference does not describe an integral reference feature at any point in the specification, claims or figures and therefore cannot disclose every aspect of the claimed invention. Examiner states that the geometric reference feature in Luther et al. is located on the bumper, as stated by the Examiner in the Office Action at page 3. Applicant has amended base claims 1, 4, 12, 14 and 17 to include language specifically stating that the geometric reference feature is not located on the bumpers. As stated above, it is necessary to grind the bumpers away after fiber grinding/polishing in order to mate the ferrules. When grinding away the bumpers, any geometric reference feature located on the bumpers would also be ground away and would not survive as a reference surface for the life of the ferrule from the point of molding and beyond, as required in the written description of the present invention. Thus, the geometric reference feature cannot be located on the bumper. Further, the surviving plane under the bumper portion after grinding the bumpers away would not be suitable as a reference region because grinding depth is not precisely controlled, the surface may not be planar and base claims 1, 4, 12, 14 and 17 specifically describe the geometric reference feature surface *not being ground* subsequent to molding.

Base Claim 1 has been amended to include "wherein the ferrule body has an integrally formed geometry feature *not located on a bumper of the ferrule body* that defines a reference plane..." Base Claim 4 has been amended to include "*wherein the molded geometric reference feature is not located on a bumper of the ferrule body.*" Base claim 12 has been amended to include "*a molded geometric reference feature not located on a bumper of the*

ferrule body for eliminating the need for using a truncated measurement pin". Claim 14 has been amended to include "geometric reference feature on an exterior surface of the ferrule body proximate the end face and integral with the ferrule body *and not located on a bumper* of the ferrule." Claim 17 has been amended to include "wherein the ferrule body comprises a geometry feature on an exterior surface of the ferrule body *not located on a bumper of the ferrule* that is formed by molding and is not subsequently machined." Geometry reference features not located on a bumper are shown in Figs. 2a-d, 3a-b, 5a-b, 8a-b and 11a-c, among others. Thus, as amended, the ferrule does not include the geometry reference feature located on the bumpered portion of the ferrule as stated by the Examiner in Luther et al. Therefore, base Claims 1, 4, 12, 14 and 17 are patentable for at least these reasons. Remaining pending Claims 2, 7-11, 15-16 and 18-19 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base Claims 1, 4, 12, 14 and 17 and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-8 and 10-20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 9 and 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable (obvious) over Luther et al. Claim 9 is a dependent claim dependent upon base claim 4 and therefore includes all of the limitations of base claim 4 as amended. Applicant believes that, as amended, base claim 4 is in condition for allowance and therefore claim 9 is allowable because it includes the amendment "*wherein the molded geometric reference feature is not located on a bumper of the ferrule body;*". Claims 21-23 have been canceled. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection to claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

In summary, Applicant submits that the pending claims 1, 2, 4, 7-12 and 14-19 are patentable for at least reasons discussed herein. Regardless, Applicant expressly reserves the right to present additional arguments in support of the patentability of the claims in the event that the Examiner disagrees with the arguments presented herein.

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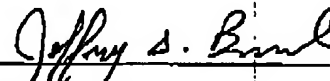
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CONCLUSION

The presently pending claims 1, 2, 4, 7-12 and 14-19 are allowable for at least the reasons stated herein. This response is being timely filed with a petition and fee for three (3) months extension of time and is fully responsive to the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for immediate allowance, and the undersigned respectfully solicits such action on the part of the Examiner.

This response does not result in more independent or total claims than paid for previously. Accordingly, no fee for excess claims is due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any other fee due in connection with the filing of this response to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If an extension of time not already accounted for is required with this response, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension of time and the Examiner is likewise authorized to charge the petition fee to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeffrey S. Bernard
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 50,020
P.O. Box 489
Hickory, NC 28603
Telephone: 828/901-5032
Facsimile: 828/901-5206

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